


ROYAL METROPOLITAN INFIRMARY
FOR SICK CHILDREN
CIRCULAR
1826

 *At this season of alarm, excited by an increased prevalence of Small-pox in the Metropolis, and many parts of the Country, the following address, and accompanying documents, will not be perused without interest.*

CIRCULAR.

THE DIRECTORS and GOVERNORS of the Royal Metropolitan Infirmary for Sick Children, assembled at a general meeting, held on the 10th of May, 1826, the Right Reverend the LORD BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS in the Chair, having resolved unanimously, that a general Table of the state of Vaccination, and other points connected with the history of small-pox, which I had arranged and computed from the registers of the Institution, should be printed and circulated for the purpose of demonstrating, as far as the experience of the Medical Officers of the Infirmary can accomplish, how incorrect, and in many instances groundless, are the reports lately disseminated of the inefficacy of cow-pox: I have much pleasure in calling your attention to the table in question addressed to you in virtue of that resolution.

Anxious to perform my part of this gratifying duty in a manner commensurate with its importance, and with the expressed desire of the Directors and Governors, I have deemed it necessary, in my individual capacity of the oldest Medical Officer of the Institution, to accompany the table itself with some explanatory observations, and a diagrammatic chart (printed at my own expense, in order to relieve the funds of the Charity); so as to enable you to draw conclusions highly favorable to a system from which parents have hitherto derived the greatest measure of comfort.

You are aware that the question of Vaccination has very recently engaged a considerable share of the attention of the public and of Government; and you are probably not a stranger to the vague assertions that have been made on the subject, as well as to the wavering opinions that are still afloat, respecting it, among the better informed classes of society, notwithstanding the able and conclusive report from the National Vaccine Board, the members of which, and its indefatigable President, have taken such pains to investigate the question. It is with a view to share in their praiseworthy efforts at such a conjuncture, that I have collated a mass of well-digested facts, found in the registers of the Royal Infirmary, by which the truth, already placed in so clear a light in the documents laid before Parliament by that Board, will be further demonstrated.

The materials out of which the general table is constructed, are supplied by the parents of the children, when the latter are registered on their admission. On such an occasion, and touching such an object, the parents can have no possible motive for deceiving the Medical Officers; so that the information they give may be presumed to be accurate. They are asked whether the child, whose age has been previously ascertained, has had the small-pox natural or inoculated; whether it has been vaccinated, or remains yet unprotected. Whenever small-pox has occurred after vaccination, the parents have been found ready enough to supply that fact, which, after as accurate an investigation into the reality of the case, as can be instituted, is regularly registered. The whole of this information is arranged in appro-

priate columns, under the superintendence of the respective Physicians and Surgeons; and a monthly report of it is made by them to the Directing Committee. The facts thus learned, extend, at this moment, to upwards of 30,000 children, under the age of thirteen* years, whose history, in regard to small-pox and vaccination, has thus been narrowly inquired into. From those facts the following conclusions are derived.

1st. That the practice of vaccination is steadily gaining ground among the poorer classes of society.

2d. That the inoculation of small-pox is of rarer occurrence than heretofore.

3d. That in proportion as the former practice increases, and the latter decreases, so have the cases of natural small-pox diminished.

4th. That parents, in general, are much less indifferent, than hitherto, to the great advantage of securing their offspring by an early vaccination, from the ravages of a most loathsome disease.

5th. That small-pox after vaccination has been of very rare occurrence, and when it has occurred, it has been mild in its course, and harmless.

6th, and lastly. That although two cases of death referred to small-pox after vaccination by the parents, have been reported to your medical officers since the first foundation of the institution, positive proofs do not exist of the real nature of those cases, and they have therefore not been noticed in the table.

The calculations, contained in the general table, have been made in two ways. The proportions are first given, as deduced from the actual numbers registered, in units and decimal fractions;—and, secondly, as deduced from what the numbers registered would give, if extended to a million, in decimal fractions only: the latter calculation being, like the first, founded on the *actual* numbers. In pursuing this second mode of calculating, (which is that now generally adopted at the Insurance Offices,) I had the satisfaction of being assisted by my friend Mr. Finlaison, the able Actuary of the National Debt Office, who is, moreover, a supporter of the Infirmary.

Those who prefer the language which speaks to the eye, to that of numbers, will probably find the diagrammatic chart more useful. There, inspection alone will shew, that the *red line* denoting the progress of Vaccination rises higher in the IV. and V. period (1824-1825), because, at that time, small-pox, after having sensibly diminished during the preceding year, had, as may be seen by the *blue line*, again increased, and raged almost epidemically, so that more parents flew to the resource of cow-pox, in hopes of saving their children. This latter circumstance, caused a corresponding and a remarkable depression in the *green line*, intended to mark the diminution of prejudice against, or carelessness respecting cow-pox.

With regard to the *yellow line*, which is meant to exhibit the extent to which the inoculation of small-pox has been carried, within the whole period embraced by the chart, it speaks for itself. This baneful practice, which more than any prejudice against vaccination, opposes itself to the full and glorious result of the Jennerian Discovery, by keeping up the *fomes* of contagion intended to be extinguished by the cow-pox, is,

* By a typographical error *twelve* years is printed instead of thirteen at the head of the table.

fortunately, on the decline, and must continue to decline, if the medical profession act with firmness. With what regret then, must the public witness any attempt to perpetuate, by the proposition of extravagant experiments, a loathsome disorder, which, as the experience of many continental districts proves, may be completely eradicated, after having existed in Europe for a period of thirteen centuries, by a steady, persevering, and, I may add, correct performance of Vaccination.

A. B. GRANVILLE, M. D. F. R. S.

16, Grafton Street, Berkeley Square,
7th June, 1826.

Physician in Ordinary,
to H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence.

P. S. Should the perusal of the present documents, lead you to think the Royal Infirmary for Sick Children worthy of your support, it is humbly solicited that you will become a subscriber, if you are not already one, or prevail on the benevolent to afford it their charitable assistance.

The Royal Metropolitan Infirmary for Sick Children, is supported by voluntary contributions. Subscribers of Two Guineas annually, are Directors, and of One Guinea, Governors.

It has been calculated by the Treasurers, the Rev. A. Hamilton and John Harriss, Esquire, that for every guinea subscribed, about eighteen children have received medical or surgical relief at this most important Institution, which is open without distinction to all the children of the poor.

Subscriptions and Donations are received by the Treasurers; or by Messrs. T. Coutts and Co.; Herries, Farquhar, Halliday and Co.; Hammersly and Co.; Drummond, &c. as well as by any of the members of the Directing Committee, which includes the Medical Officers.

ROYAL METROPOLITAN INFIRMARY

FOR

SICK CHILDREN.

PATRON, THE KING.

VACCINATION.

Documents exhibiting the actual state of
Vaccination among 30,117 Children of the
Poor in the metropolis, presented at a
General Meeting of the Directors and
Governors of the Infirmary.

THE RIGHT REVEREND

LORD BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS
IN THE CHAIR.

